

In its annual report on remittances to Caribbean and Latin American nations in 2007, the Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund stated that Jamaicans, Haitians, Guyanese, Trinidadians, Surinamese and Belizeans in that order sent a record amount of funds to their relatives and close friends last year.

And while the MIF didn't cite a specific sum for Barbados, the United Nations and the World Bank had previously estimated that Bajans abroad had sent more than \$140 million to their country.

Overall, remittances to the Caribbean and Latin America rose by seven per cent in 2007 over the figure for 2006, the first year for which there wasn't a double digit increase stated the Fund.

The importance of the remittances, the MIF explained, could be seen in "the significant contribution to the region's economy. For instance, Jamaicans remitted \$1.9 billion to relatives, accounting for 18% if country's gross domestic product while Haitians' \$1.8 billion in remittances represented 35% of the GDP. Guyana's was by far the largest single contributor to the GDP. The \$424 million may have been about 16 per cent if Jamaicans' flow but the money was 43% of the economy.

The smallest contribution was the \$125 million repatriated to Trinidad and Tobago. It represented one per cent of the economy while in Suriname's case, the \$115 million was 5%.

The Dominican Republic was the largest single recipient of remittances in the larger Caribbean region, receiving \$3.1 billion.

Belize's receipts of \$105 million were the equivalent of 8% of the GDP.

A closer look at the figures for 2007 and prior years showed that remittances to:

Jamaica rose from \$983 million in 2001 to almost \$1.5 billion in 2004.

Haiti, they skyrocketed from less than \$900 million in 2001 to just under \$1 billion in 2005, rising to last year's record level of 1.5 billion.

Guyana are considered a "crucial source of income."

The Caribbean and Latin America as a whole reached \$66.5 billion, about seven per cent more than in 2006.

Mexico amounted to almost \$24 billion, and was virtually unchanged, rising barely by one percent. Apparently Mexicans "appear to be less inclined to send money home, citing concerns about stricter enforcement of immigration laws and a slowing economy in the United States," the MIF reported.

Brazil, totaled \$7 billion, a decline of 4%. The reason: "increasing opportunities at home and a strengthening local currency, the 'Real,' has appreciated 14 percent against the dollar over the past 12 months.

The various countries pay for "basic expenses such as food, shelter, clothing and medicines but some of them are saved.

The region, about 75 percent of them "come from the United States, Spain and Japan."

Jamaica, the Dominica Republic, Guyana, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago have risen every year since the beginning of the 21st century.

STATEMENT OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 4, 2008

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to honor the 60th anniversary of

the state of Israel and to honor the people and accomplishments of this great nation.

From its inception in 1948, Israel has had a long and painful struggle to sustain itself. On May 14, 1948, the United States was the first Nation to extend its formal recognition of Israel as a state, and our two states have since maintained a strong relationship through shared values and interests. Israel has a great deal to be proud of. It has built itself into a strong democracy with an advanced industrial, market economy in one of the most volatile regions of the world. While facing many challenges, it places a great emphasis on quality of life and leads the region in regards to education, democratic participation, and having a free press. The United States and Israel have had a strong relationship throughout their history, sharing these values. Our own country has benefited from Israel's prosperous economy, and in 1985, Israel and the United States concluded a free trade agreement. Israel's Silicon Wadi, an area comparable to the U.S.'s Silicon Valley, is one of the most robust telecommunications and technology industry areas in the world. As testament to this fact, important American companies have research and development facilities located there.

As we honor Israel's accomplishments, we also recognize the continued security threats the country faces from terrorist organizations and aggressive neighbors. Innocent Israelis are attacked with rockets and suicide bombings while belligerent leaders of other nations call for nothing short of Israel's destruction. The American people and Congress have consistently condemned these attacks on our friends. In the most recent example—rocket attacks from Gaza—the House passed a resolution strongly condemning these attacks, as well as the organizations and states supporting them. We have also provided aid for Israel's defense and for the security of the Middle East and will continue to support Israel's right to defend itself. While the challenges remain, the Israeli people have endured and persevered throughout history, and they will continue to do so, and the United States will remain a stalwart ally.

Madam Speaker, I again congratulate the people of Israel on this historic anniversary and wish them a peaceful and prosperous future.

A TRIBUTE TO LISSA LAYNG REYNOLDS

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 4, 2008

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Lissa Layng Reynolds of South Pasadena, California. Every March we celebrate Women's History Month in recognition of the contributions and the sacrifices made by our Nation's women. Accordingly, it is my privilege to highlight Mrs. Reynolds as a woman whose extraordinary efforts are vital to my district.

Lissa is a professional theater, film, and television actress whose interaction with her community goes far beyond the stage and screen. As the president of the California Performing Arts Centre and co-artistic director of the award-winning Fremont Centre Theatre in

South Pasadena, Lissa will celebrate the theatre's 10th anniversary this year. She shares the milestone with her husband, James, who also serves as the theatre's co-artistic director and can be seen on NBC's "Days of Our Lives" as Commissioner Abe Carver. Together they have produced and co-produced over 30 plays during the Fremont Centre Theatre's decade of existence. Lissa and her family have lived in South Pasadena for over 20 years. Her son, Jed Reynolds, graduated from South Pasadena schools and now coaches the high school junior varsity basketball team. Jed is also pursuing a career as an actor and is currently starring in the Fremont Centre Theatre's hit show "Ravensridge."

In addition to the Fremont Centre Theatre, Lissa and James own and operate Classes Unlimited, an adult learning center, and Big Men Stuff, a clothing company that uses slogans to combat domestic abuse. The Reynolds' were selected as two of the most influential people in Pasadena by Pasadena Weekly and they received the Gold Crown Award from the Pasadena Arts Council for supporting local arts education and development.

Giving back to the community is a priority for Lissa. Her busy schedule is packed equally with volunteer, fundraising, and professional efforts. Examples include the Haven House Women's Shelter in Pasadena, the Pasadena Humane Society, the Foothill YMCA, and the South Pasadena Police Department. For many years Lissa has joined her husband on USO handshake and educational tours for the troops and for their families. To encourage students to become active in the arts, the pair frequently directs local elementary school productions of Shakespeare and hosts an annual charity celebrity basketball tournament to benefit South Pasadena schools. For her continued philanthropic efforts Lissa has been honored by numerous organizations, including Women at Work, the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, and the Tournament of Roses Association.

Lissa's stage is her community; rather than focus on herself, she works to make South Pasadena the star. Her selfless service to the South Pasadena community is an invaluable addition to the legacy of Women's History Month. With gratitude and admiration, I ask all Members of Congress to join me today in honoring an extraordinary woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Mrs. Lissa Layng Reynolds.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING COACH MICHELLE MISHLER FOR COACHING THE HILAND HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM TO WINNING THE GIRLS' DIVISION IV STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 4, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker: Whereas, Coach Michelle Mishler showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, Michelle Mishler was a leader and mentor for the Hiland High School Girls' Basketball Team; and